

CREEPY
#135



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EXCITEMENT!

CREEPY

\$8.00

NOV 1981

IT CAME FROM BEYOND
THE STARS TO WREAK
HAVOC UPON AN
UNSUSPECTING
EARTH!



THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

INCREDIBLE MODELS & SETS FROM THE MOST EXCITING MOVIE EVER!

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NEW!

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NEW!

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

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TURRET AND PROBOT PLAYSET: Watch out Rebels! Probot is looking for you! You can relive the dramatic battle on the ice planet of Hoth with this deluxe playset! You can eject the Probot with the action lever that you control! For added thrills, there is a realistic Rebel Laser Gun Turret. Action figures fit inside through the opening side door and into the hatch on top. Turret laser cannons slide as in turn! Intricately detailed and colorful plastic Probot and Rebel Turret are just what you need to live the world of your Star Wars action figures! Durable plastic will last for years! Action figures sold separately! #26267—\$15.95

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CREEPY

THE FIRST ISSUE
THE FIRST ISSUE
THE FIRST ISSUE

CREEPY

NUMBER 135

FEBRUARY 1982

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WEDDING GIFT 6

As the wind howled through the eaves and the old, decrepit house creaked with age, the young bride began to feel it closing in on her: a presence, its hot breath fisted in her face, its intent unmistakably...evil!



WE'VE SINNED 16

A young man is roaming the Christmas-tide streets, chopping old ladies into little pieces! A lonely young girl wanders in search of her father! The two are on a collision course that must end in death!



ANGEL HAIR 25

The woman bewitched me with her unholy beauty and her silken voice! After one glass of her wine, I was in ecstasy! But there was a price to pay for this shred of heaven, a price measured in blood!



STRANGE LAND 33

The young village boy would have given anything for more excitement...but he never counted on seeing his parents scooped by a monstrous outer space creature and dropped to their deaths!



LOVE STORY 43

I liked the guy. From all accounts, he was a good provider, a loving father, a faithful husband. I liked the guy...even as he was twitching and spouting blood from the hot slugs I was pumping into him!



YONDER STAR 55

Gus Trank was running out of time and out of options! He was flying without instruments at night over an unfamiliar sea! He was sure that any land he might find would be welcome! Wrong again, Gus!

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Dear Uncle Creepy



The cover of **CREEPY** #133 lured me into buying the entire magazine—that's how good it was! Jeff Easley is a superb artist! This cover had a certain grandeur, an otherworldly beauty, and a story to tell that I am still working out in my head!

The story, which the cover represented, "Kobold," did nothing for my imagination except perhaps to shrink it. It was a mess! Author Budd Lewis managed to make a simple story complicated, and he reduced two-dimensional characters to one dimension. Illustrators Romeo Tanghal and Alfredo Alcala could hardly match the beauty of the cover, though they made a very professional stab at it.

In the future, Warren editors should include an index which explains and clarifies a story written by Lewis.

JEFF SINGER
Delray Beach, Fla.

CREEPY has definitely declined in quality over the past few years. I'm not saying the magazine stinks, not yet anyway. After all, I'm still buying it. However, major repairs are required before the whole ship goes down the tubes.

If you look at some of the back issues, you'll see names like Burt Wrightson, Neal Adams, and Richard Corben. In **CREEPY** #133, we had the likes of Abel Laxamana, Martin Salvador, Paul Neary, and Albeater Redzone. Professionals all, but I think my is point is made: the greats have disappeared from the pages of **CREEPY**, except in reprints, and we all know that reprints are nothing more than freshly minted garbage.

Please try to make an effort to upgrade the quality of **CREEPY**. I would hate to have to go elsewhere for my weekly dose of comic book licks.

JOHN SHEIDMAN
Croton, N.Y.

I got a thrill from reading "The Dead Remember" in **CREEPY** #133. Supernatural was the key element to the story, and the driving force of the plot. It is one of the few stories that I have ever read in **CREEPY** that could have actually happened, because there was no real fantasy element in it. All of the menace lurked in the minds of the characters.

Bruce Jones once again created characters that were believable and sympathetic, and he tied his plot up with a subtle chill at the end. No gore, just good, clean death!

BOB MANNIS
New York, N.Y.

Like some polky old mare straining up a hill, **CREEPY** is making its slow way back to horror. The old **CREEPY** style logo is back. There is less science fiction and fantasy. But I'm still looking for total horror.

I would also like to see more Richard Corben, at least once every issue. Corben has a way of turning mediocre stories into great stories. Bruce Jones is another of my heroes. His stories always walk the delicate line between true horror and recognizable human drama.

One more suggestion: how about a **CREEPY** movie? Warren couldn't do any worse than the **HEAVY METAL** movie. I think it would be a smash!

JUAN CARLOS MENDIZABAL
Daly City, Calif.

Visually, **CREEPY** #133 was a dynamic issue! Great cover by Jeff Easley, and wonderful artwork within by the likes of Abel Laxamana, Romeo Tanghal, Alfredo Alcala, Fred Carrillo, and Paul Neary.

But once I began reading the words wrapped around these wonderful visuals, my heart sank. The stories were maddening, confusing moses! I am particularly thinking of "Savage Cargo" and "Kobold." These were stories which were basically simple and yet forced the readers to struggle to figure out what was going on!

The only story that hung together was "Bring on the Clowns," a cynical little tale that isn't about to challenge anyone's cognitive abilities. "Junior" also made sense, but it had very little point to it. The story's lesson seemed only to apply to genetic freaks who are looked up by their parents and who are so frightening that people instinctively want to kill them. There aren't many of those around today.

Is it asking too much to have stories that reach toward the fan taste, and yet have some relevance to all of us? Science fictionists and horror writers have been achieving this for decades. Even **CREEPY** has pulled off this feat in the past. Let's look forward to more in the future.

DORE LANSON
Allanah, Neb.

Artist Paul Neary and author Albeater Redzone seemed to be having their own individual identity crisis when they collaborated on the story "Savage Cargo" in **CREEPY** #133.

Neary wants to be Estaban Maroto. Many of his characters have the Maroto look, especially the women, while many of the others have the Neary look, which is rather bland and clumsy.

Redzone wants to be Raymond Chandler, with his close scrapes, scheming, greedy villains, wackcracking heroes and tough-talking heroes.

The resultant story was what you would expect from such a homogenized and derivative effort. It was entertaining and diverting, but hardly built to any kind of impact or catharsis. I'm hoping for better in the future, but I will not be holding my breath.

PAUL BLACK
Edison, N.J.

How did the excellent Abel Laxamana get roped into illustrating the very normal and earthbound "Junior" in **CREEPY** #133? Laxamana is known for his humorous pieces, his space adventures, his superheroes. But in "Junior" he's stuck with a middle-class family's problems in Anytown, U.S.A., a family who happens to have an octopus for a son. This was a story for Martin Salvador.

Laxamana did manage to wrest whatever drama was to be found from the story by Will Richardson and Timothy Moriarty. I just hope that in the future this superb artist will be assigned only the very best stories **CREEPY** has to offer.

MARK SPENCER
Chicago, Ill.

"Bring on the Clowns" in **CREEPY** #133 was a true sign of the times: bloody, pointless, and unnerve. It made my stomach turn. I liked it.


One of the main reasons the story had such impact was Fred Carrillo's superb artwork. Carrillo emphasized the realism of the gritty cityscape and the toll that it takes on the urbanites. Everyone looked like they were two paces from their graves!

Issue by issue, Fred Carrillo grows as an artist. The eye for detail, his chameleon versatility in adapting his style to whatever mood the storyteller has created, and his excellent tonework have made watching his growth as an artist a true pleasure.

CHARLES BERGMAN
Bayside, N.Y.

Dear Uncle Creepy

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145 East 32nd Street
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I'M NOT HOISING
AROUND THIS TIME, DEAR READERS!
I'VE PUT TOGETHER AN ISSUE THAT'S
FULL OF SHOCKS, SURPRISES AND MURDER
AT THE GALLOP! IT'S WORTH EVERY
CENTAUR YOU PAID
FOR IT!

IT'S GOT
DEMENTED LOVE, RESENTED
LOVE, HAUNTED HOUSES AND
HOME-VIOAL MANIACS! IT'S
FULL OF MEN THAT ARE WISE
MEN TO DESPISE, SOWCERRERS,
SATANISTS, MAD GODS AND
MIRACLES!

BUT I WON'T
MAD YOU ANY FURTHER!
NOW! TURN THE PAGE
AND TREMBLE!

THE OLD HOUSE LOOMS QUANTLY, A BASTION AGAINST THE WIND-DRIVEN RAIN. CARLA IS HAPPY, PERFECTLY HAPPY AS SHE RACES ONTO ITS RICKETY FRONT PORCH, THOUGH FATIGUED BY A FOUR-HOUR TRIP... DESPITE THE ELEMENTAL FRENZY OF THE STORM... HER HEART SOARS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SHE IS THE NEW BRIDE OF DR. MICHAEL JOHNSON!

YET... TO A HOUSE, ESPECIALLY THIS HOUSE, SUCH MOMENTS OF JOY ARE SHORT-LIVED.

WELL, MRS. JOHNSON! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY BOYHOOD HOME?



THE WEDDING GIFT!



LOVE IT! BUT AREN'T YOU FORGETTING A TIME-HONORED CUSTOM, DOCTOR?



LIKE CARRYING A GIRL OVER THE THRESHOLD?

MMMMMM!

A SHORT WHILE LATER, THE
HONEYMOONERS HAVE SETTLED IN
FOR THE NIGHT...

OH, BABE...
YOU'RE GORGEOUS!
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
WOMAN I'VE EVER
MARRIED!

I SHOULD
MOVE SO, OR
JOHNSON!

FOR
YOUR SAKE, I'D
BETTER NOT FIND
OUT ABOUT ANY
PREVIOUS MRS.
JOHNSONS!

MR. J...
YOU'RE MY ONE
AND ONLY!

SUDDENLY, THE MOOD IS
SHATTERED BY STRIDENT
HAMMERING ON THE FLOOR
BELOW!

WHAT
THE
DEVIL—?

**BAM!
BAM!**

HELP ME,
PLEASE! MY HUSBAND
OUR CAR—IT... IT'S
SKIDDED OFF THE ROAD!
IT... IT'S STUCK IN
THE SWAMP!

MY
HUSBAND'S
PINNED INSIDE—
HURT! AND... AND
THE CAR'S SINKING
INTO THE MIRE!
PLEASE!
YOU'VE GOT
TO HELP ME!

IT'S THE
FRONT DOOR!
SOMEONE'S TRYING
TO GET IN!

**BAM!
BAM!
BAM!**





DON'T WORRY!
I'LL GET YOUR
HUSBAND CUT! I'M
A DOCTOR!

YOU POOR
DEAR! YOU'RE SOAKED!
LET ME GET YOU
MY COAT!



CAN YOU
SHOW US WHERE
THE ACCIDENT
HAPPENED?

WHO?
WHAT DO YOU
MEAN, US? CARLA?
YOU'RE NOT GOING
ANYWHERE!



BUT
MIKE...!

LOOK! I DON'T
WANT TO SCARE THE OLD
LADY, BUT THE EXTENT
OF HER HUSBAND'S
INJURIES COULD
BE SERIOUS!

YOU STAY HERE
AND CALL THE POLICE!
HAPPY THEM NOT? THE
HOSPITAL I'LL BE
BACK AS SOON
AS I CAN!



BE
CAREFUL,
MIKE!

STOP
WORRYING!
EVERYTHING
WILL BE
FINE!



THE HOUSE SILENTLY WAITS... AND WATCHES AS
MICHAEL SAYS FAREWELL TO HIS NERVOUS
BRIDE!

ALONE IN THE LARGE, OLD
HOUSE, CARLA FEELS SO
VERY SMALL AND
VULNERABLE!



AND, FOR THE FIRST
TIME, SHE SMELLS THE
STALE, MUSKY
STENCH... OF DECAY!



AT A RAIN-SPLATTERED WINDOW, CARLA WATCHES HER HUSBAND SWALLOWED BY THE NIGHT!

TWEN...SHE REMEMBERS THE PHONE!



THE LINE... IT'S DEAD!



GOOD GOD! LIGHTNING! SOUNDED LIKE IT HIT RIGHT OUTSIDE!



AS IF ON ONE, THE ENTIRE HOUSE IS PLUNGED INTO BLACKNESS!

OH NO! THE STORM HAS KNOCKED OUT THE POWER!



SUDDENLY...THERE IS A SOUND FROM UPSTAIRS LIKE A BODY WOULNTLY TOPPLING TO THE FLOOR

WHUMP!

OH GOD!



TERRIFIED, CARLA MADLY GROPES ABOUT IN THE DARK!

C-CANDLES!



I'VE GOT TO LIGHT SOME CANDLES!



FLEE!

AN ICY,
SPECTRAL HOWL
EXTINGUISHES
THE CANDLES...

AND CARLA RUNS,
CONSUMED WITH
BLIND, NUMBING
PANIC...

... INTO THE FIRST
OPEN DOOR THAT
HOLDS THE BARREST
HINT OF SAFETY!

HEART POUNDING,
TREMBLING, SHE BRACES
HERSELF FOR A HOWL
THAT DOES NOT DEIGN TO
FOLLOW!

SUDDENLY... THE COPPERY
SCENT OF FRESH-SPILLED
BLOOD ASSAULTS HER SENSES...

NOOOOO!

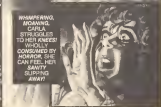
A CHANCELLER
GENTLY CREAKS
UNDER THE
WEIGHT OF A
DANGLING
CORPSE... AND A
SCREAM RISES
UNBIDDEN IN
CARLA'S
THROAT!

THIS HOUSE
IS EVIL. CARLA! AS
EVIL AS THE RESTLESS
SOULS WITHIN IT!

FLY, CARLA! FLY WHILE
YOU STILL MAY! BEFORE YOUR
HUSBAND RAMS YOU... AND POURS
LIFE DOWN YOUR THROAT AS YOU
VAINLY GASP FOR AIR.

JUST AS
MY HUSBAND DID
TO ME!

NOOOOOOOO!





BUT...THE HANDS REACH UP,
CLAMMING HER ANKLES...HER LEGS!
FINGERS CLAMP LIKE STEEL
HANDS ON HER THIGHS, AND
TIGHTEN THEIR IRON GRIP ON HER
TATTERED AND TEARING GOWN



IT IS MANY HELL-BORNE
NIGHTMARE-WRITINGS...PITTED
AGAINST THE RAVING
RESOLVE OF ONE!



HER
BATTERED
BODY THUNKS DOWN THE
WOODEN STEPS AS SHE IS
DRAGGED INTO THE BOWELS
OF THE
MOUSEY



CARLA'S SPIRIT IS WILLING...

...BUT HER FLESH, ALAS, IS WEAK!



IN HER
FINAL,
FLEETING
MOMENTS
OF LIFE...
SHE
SEES THE
THREE
LEERING
SPECTRES,
LAUGHING...
MOCKING
HER...

AND
SHE
REALIZES
THAT
SHE IS
ABOUT TO
JOIN
THEM...
FOREVER
CURSED
IN
WANDERING
SPECTRAL
DEATH!



IT IS THE LAST
REALIZATION
CARLA EVER HAS
AS MELL CLOSES
'ROUND HER
LIKE A TIGHT
DEVIL'S FIST!

AIEEE!



THE DARK MASTER
MUST BE PLEASED! HE HAS
CLAIMED YET ANOTHER
SOUL!

SHE WAS SUCH
A BEAUTIFUL GIRL,
MICHAEL! IT'S A SHAME
YOU COULDN'T HAVE
KEPT HER FOR
ANYLONG!



YES, CARLA
WAS PRETTY! BUT
THEM... SO WERE
THE OTHERS!

THE
LORD OF HELL
DEMANDS ONLY
THE BEST!



BUT NONE OF
THEM WERE AS PRETTY
AS YOU, MOTHER!

AFTER ALL THESE
YEARS, YOU'RE STILL
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
WOMAN IN MY LIFE!

AND YOU'LL
STAY THAT WAY...JUST
AS LONG AS WE KEEP
OUR PACT WITH
SATAN!



AND THEN,
YOU AND I CAN BE
TOGETHER FOR ALL
ETERNITY!

OH, MICHAEL
A MOTHER NEVER
HAD SUCH A LOVING
SON!



FOR
EVERY NEW
BRIDE WE GIVE
HIM... HE'LL
GRANT US
ANOTHER TEN
YEARS OF
LIFE!



AT THIS RATE, WE'LL
SOON BE IMMORTAL,
MOTHER!

end

prologue



... FOR WE HAVE SINNED!



"AND YOU, RALPH. I HAVE YOU
EVER REALLY CARED ABOUT POOR
ARNOLD?"

"POOR ARNOLD? IS THAT WHAT HE
IS. A POOR, INNOCENT, VICTIMIZED
BOY? HE'S A NUTCASE, MARTHA! A
SCREAMING RAVING LUNATIC!"



"YOU NEVER MISS A CHANCE TO
INSULT HIM WITH YOUR
DEROGATORY LABELS, DO YOU,
RALPH?"

"I CALL HIM AS I SEES 'EM,
MARTHA! MAYBE YOU SHOULD DO
THE SAME!"



"MAYBE IF YOU HADN'T PUSHED HIM
SO HARD WHEN HE WAS A CHILD
...MAYBE IF YOU HADN'T MADE HIM
FEEL SO AWKWARD AT
EVERYTHING HE DID. MAYBE HE
WOULD BE MORE LIKE YOU, RALPH.
A PILLAR OF MENTAL STABILITY!"

"I RAISED HIM AS I WAS RAISED,
MARTHA! AT LEAST, GAVE HIM THE
ATTENTION HE NEEDED. GOT FROM
YOU?"



"IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO
HER, YOU'D NEVER FORGIVE
YOURSELF, CAROLYN! BUT THINK
HOW YOUR HUSBAND WOULD
FEEL!"

"NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY,
CAROLYN. HE'LL ALWAYS BE CHRIS'
FATHER! AND YOU KNOW AS WELL
AS I THAT THE ONLY REASON HE
LEFT WAS BECAUSE HE COULDN'T
BEAR TO SEE YOU INVOLVED WITH
THAT OTHER MAN!"

"MAYBE THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO SAY
THIS, CAROLYN. WITH CHRIS
MISSING! YET IF SOMEONE HAD SAID
IT A LONG TIME AGO, MAYBE YOUR
LITTLE GIRL WOULDN'T HAVE RUN
OFF!"

"DON'T CALL HIM THAT, MOTHER.
HE'S NO LONGER MY
HUSBAND... AND HE'S NO LONGER
CHRIS' FATHER! HE GAVE UP THAT
PRIVILEGE WHEN HE LEFT US
THREE YEARS AGO!"

MOTHER!



THEY
MURDERED AN
OLD WOMAN TWO BLOCKS
FROM HERE. AND WE'VE
NO CLUE AS TO
WHO THEY
ARE!

"OH, MOTHER! HOW CAN YOU BE SO
CRUEL?"

YOU WATCH
YOURSELF, WILLY
BOY. KEEP AN EYE
OUT FOR ANYTHING
SUSPICIOUS!



THANKS,
SARGE! YOU HAVE
A GOOD CHRISTMAS
TOO!

ANOTHER
CHRISTMAS EVE
WILLY AND THE
CRAZIES ARE OUT
IN FULL FORCE
TONIGHT!



DON'T GO ACCUSING ME OF
NEGLECT, MR. PERFECT! IT'S YOU
ARNOLD'S REBELLING AGAINST
YOU AND ALL YOU STAND FOR!"

ARNOLD IS REBELLING AGAINST
SOCIETY, MARATHA! YOUR NEGLECT
AND MY PUSING ONLY SERVED TO
COMPOSE HIM! AND GOD ALONE
KNOWS WHAT EFFECT THOSE
MANS HAD ON HIM IN SCHOOL!"



"THE SISTERS GAVE HIM A GOOD
EDUCATION, RALPH!"

"YEAH I'LL JUST BET THEY
TAUGHT HIM A LOT! WHATEVER
THEY ADDED TO HIS EDUCATION
MADE HIM LOATHE THE RIGHT OF
WOMEN!"



THAT'S NOT TRUE, RALPH! ARNOLD
DOESN'T HATE WOMEN! HE'S
JUST BASHFUL AROUND THEM! HE'S
INTROVERTED AND SHY, IS ALL!"

"OH! AND WHY'S THAT, MARATHA!
MIGHT HIS SOCIAL RETARDATION
HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE
GOOD MANS... OR DO WE HAVE OLD
MISS CLOUTCHER TO THANK FOR
THAT?"



"THINK ABOUT IT, CAROLYN! IT
ISN'T ME WHO'S BEEN CRUEL! I'M
NOT THE ONE WHO DIVORCED A
GOOD MAN! A MAN BUSTLING WITH
LOVE FOR YOU AND YOUR
DAUGHTER!"



"WOW AM I THE ONE WHO'S
PREVENTED THAT MAN FROM
SEEKING HIS DAUGHTER SINCE THAT
DIVORCE! I'VE NEVER CONDONED
THE WAY YOU'VE DEPRIVED CHRIS
OF HER FATHER'S LOVE!"



"IT'S SELFISH, CAROLYN! SELFISH
AND INTENSE! THE WAY YOU'VE
KEPT HER FOR YOURSELF... TO
SERVE YOUR OWN POSSESSIVE
NEEDS!"



"MOTHER! I LOVE CHRIS! AND
SHE LOVES ME! SHE'S ALL I HAVE IN
THE WORLD!"

"IT ALL REVERTS BACK TO THAT, DOESN'T IT, RALPH? EVERY TIME WE ARGUE OVER ARNOLD, YOU BLAME POOR MISS GROTCHET FOR ALL OF YOUR SON'S DEFICIENCIES!"



WHAT SHE DID CERTAINLY DIDN'T HELP ARNOLD, MARTHA!

"SHE... SHE WAS A SACK OLD WOMAN, RALPH! SACK TO DEATH FROM LOWLIVENESS! A-ARNOLD WAS A COMFORT TO HER... TH-THOSE TIMES!"



"COMFORT?? MY GOD, MARTHA! THE THINGS SHE DID TO THAT BOY ARE GUTWANKING! AND WHEN HE WAS TEN YEARS OLD, YET! FOR GOD'S SAKE, HOW CAN YOU FORGIVE HER FOR THOSE PERVERSIONS?"

"DON'T BLEMSH HER MEMORY ANY MORE THAN IT ALREADY IS, RALPH! CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND HOW GUILTY SHE MUST HAVE FELT TO DO WHAT SHE DID... IN THAT INSTITUTION?"



SHE HUNG HERSELF, MARTHA! AND IN MY OPINION, SHE ESCAPED JUSTICE! THE DAMAGE SHE DID TO ARNOLD CAN NEVER BE REPAIRED! HE HATES ALL WOMEN BECAUSE OF HER!"

"YES, YOU'VE MADE YOUR DAUGHTER YOUR WHOLE WORLD, CAROLYN! BUT IN DOING SO, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER? AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO WILLY?"



"YOUR SELFISHNESS HAS MADE THEM BOTH LONELY, SCARED PEOPLE! YET, YOUR OWN POSSESSIONSNESS HAS BLINDED YOU TO THAT!"



HE... HE'S NEVER LOVED HER, MOTHER! HE DOESN'T CARE IF CHRIS LIVES OR DIES!"

"YOU WANT TO BELIEVE THAT, CAROLYN! TO RATIONALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE! YET, WE BOTH KNOW CHRIS IS MORE PRECIOUS TO WILLY THAN LIFE ITSELF!"



"HE MAY BE THREE THOUSAND MILES AWAY... IN A COLD AND LONELY CITY... AND YOU MAY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING HIM FROM HIS DAUGHTER... BUT WE BOTH KNOW WILLY'S THOUGHTS ARE WITH THAT CHILD ALWAYS! ESPECIALLY TONIGHT!"

WHERE ARE YOUR CHILDREN TONIGHT?

"YOU YOU'RE WRONG, RALPH! ARNOLD DOESN'T HATE ALL WOMEN! HE LOVES ME! HE'LL ALWAYS LOVE HIS MOTHER!"

"GOOD GOD, MARTHA! YOU'RE SO DAMNED BLIND! ALL THOSE YEARS OF NEGLECT AND INDIFFERENCE... I HE LOATHES THE VERY SIGHT OF YOU!"



"BETWEEN YOU, THE AUNTS AND OLD LADY CROCHET, IT'S A WONDER THAT BOY'S NOT ON A FURRY FARM SOMEWHERE, WALLOWING KNEE-DEEP IN HIS OWN EXCREMENT!"



"THE KID SEES ALL WOMEN AS A SCORCHIE PUT UPON THIS EARTH TO PUNISH HIM! IT'S NO WONDER HE PREFERS THE COMPANIONSHIP OF BOYS TO GIRLS!"

"THAT ISN'T SO, RALPH!"



"HOW DO YOU THINK WILLY FEELS KNOWING THAT HE HAS TO SPEND ANOTHER CHRISTMAS WITHOUT HIS BELOVED LITTLE GIRL? AND WHAT OF CHRIS' FEELINGS? SHE KNOWS YOU WON'T ALLOW HER TO SEE HER DADDY ON THIS MOST SPECIAL OF ALL NIGHTS!"



"CAROLYN, YOU'RE MY BABY! I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOU'LL EVER KNOW! BUT YOU ARE A SPOILED, INSENSITIVE HUMAN BEING. AND THAT IS NO ONE'S FAULT BUT MINE, FOR NOT RAISING YOU WITH A STRONGER MORAL CHARACTER!"



"DON'T REPEAT MY ERRORS WITH YOUR DAUGHTER. CAROLYN LOVE IS TOO PRECIOUS! DON'T DEPRIVE HER OF YOURS OR WILLY'S FOR ONE DAY. SHE'LL LEAVE YOU FOR THE MAN WHOSE LOVE IS PUREST OF ALL... HER FATHER!"



"ARNOLD HAS LOTS OF FEMALE FRIENDS! DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE LAST TIME WE SAW HIM? HE WAS WITH THOSE THREE VERY PRETTY GIRLS!"

Oh, MARTHA...HOW CAN YOU WALLOW SO BLATANTLY IN YOUR IGNORANCE?"

AIEEEEE!



Oh, MOTHER...I DO YOU REALLY THINK SHE'LL GO TO HIM. TO WILLY?"

I THINK THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE SHE'S THERE ALREADY!"



CONNECTION, LARMAN. OLD WOMAN!

THOSE PRETTY GIRLS, AS YOU SO NAIVELY PUT IT, ARE AS COMPOSED AS ARNOLD! THEY'RE BOYS, MARTHA! BOYS IN GRAD! AND THEY'RE AS SICK AS YOUR TWISTED SON!"



"I...I DON'T BELIEVE IT!"

"YOU D BETTER, SWEETHEART. GUESS CHANCES ARE, THEY ALL HAD MOTHERS - JUST LIKE YOU, WHO TAUGHT THEM HOW TO DESIRE THEMSELVES AND MATE THE FEMALE HALF OF THE HUMAN SPECIES!"



K-YOU... YOU'RE NOT GIRLS!

"I'M NEW YORK! BUT THAT'S TWO THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY! HOW... HOW COULD SHE - SHE'S JUST A BABY!"



BUT THERE AIN'T A DAMN THING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!

WHETHER YOU KNOW IT OR NOT... YOU'RE A DEAD MAN!

"IT'S BEEN KNOWN TO HAPPEN, CAROLYN! LOVE KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES! IT'S THE ONE THING YOU CAN'T FENCE IN!"



NO! NOOOO! DON'T YOU MURDER MY DADDY!

UGHWW!

"OH, HAHM, HOW CAN THERE BE SO MUCH MATED...SO MUCH CONFUSION IN THE WORLD? HOW CAN THERE BE SO MANY PEOPLE LIKE...LIKE ARNOLD?"

"I THINK IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH LOVE, MARTHA."

"N-NO! WOODY LEAVE HER ALONE! DAMN YOU!"

LET HER GO!

"...OR MORE APPROPRIATELY THE LACK OF IT!"

"WE SIMPLY SHOULD HAVE HAD MORE LOVE FOR ARNOLD..."

BAM!
BLAM!

BOOM!

"AND IN TURN, MAYBE HE WOULD HAVE HAD MORE LOVE...FOR THE WORLD!"

OH MY GOD!

"MAYBE I SHOULD CALL WILLY, MOTHER! MAYBE-I!"

"I THINK A CALL IS LONG OVERDUE, CAROLYN!"

OH CAROLYN!
OH B-BABY!
MY BABY!

"AND WHO KNOWS..."

D-DADDY... I
CAME TO SEE!
YOU, DADDY!

I CAME TO
BRING THIS
JUST FOR
YOU!

"YOU MIGHT FIND IT'S GOING TO BE A PRETTY GOOD CHRISTMAS, AFTER ALL!"

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ANGEL HAIR WINE!

BLEAK DECEMBER GRIZZLED THE SKY! SNOW TUMBLED WILDLY THROUGH THE DIRTY CITY STREETS! DEAD AUTOMOBILES CLOUDED THE AVENUE, ALREADY HALF-BURIED BY THE JOY WINTER BLAZZARD! OTHERS, SOON TO DIE, INCHED DEEPER INTO THE DRIFTS!

LIMITED CHOICE! AS I MADE MY JOB SEEMED TO SEND ME THERE EVERY TIME THE CITY WAS KNEE-HIGH IN SNOW!

I LEFT THE BUS TERMINAL, ZIG-ZAGGING THROUGH SNOWFLAKES THE SIZE OF MOTORBALLS! THE COLD WAS LIKE NEEDLES IN MY LUNGS! A BLOCK LATER, I ADMITTED DEFEAT AND DUCKED INTO A WELCOMING STARWELL!



THE ALCOVE WAS THE ENTRANCEWAY TO A DINGY LITTLE BAR! THE WINDOWS WERE CLOUDED WITH A DIRTY FILM. STILL, I COULD SEE PEOPLE MOVING ABOUT INSIDE!

AN OLD MAN WITH RUNNY YELLOW EYES FED NICKLES INTO AN ANTIQUE WURLITZER! IT HUMMED AND WHIRLED, BUT NO MUSIC EMERGED!

THEN, THE OLD MAN SHAMMALED ONTO THE DANCE FLOOR, SPREADING ONE ARM AND CROOKING ANOTHER, TO ACCOMMODATE AN RAGWARY PARTNER! HE GLIDED AROUND THE TAVERN IN STEP WITH MUSIC THAT WAS SOLELY WITHIN HIS OBVIOUSLY DEMENTED MIND!



BEHIND THE BAR, A WOMAN TOOK A BOTTLE FROM THE SHELF, BLEW OFF THE DUST AND UNCOOKED IT! SHE SLOSHED THE CONTENTS INTO A TALL GLASS, THE COLORED BUBBLED UNUSUALLY!

THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF GETTING TO MY HOTEL WAS TEMPORARILY FORGOTTEN! WALKING WAS OUT...IT WAS FAR TOO COLD! AND NO CAR COULD PLOW THROUGH THIS SQUALL! I WAS STRANDED...AND I KNEW THAT I MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE BEST OF IT!

JUST AS I'D MADE UP MY MIND TO ENJOY A FEW WARMING BELTS, THE WOMAN WAS THERE...SMILING, WELCOMEING ME TO COME INSIDE!

SHE WAS LOVELY, WITH HAIR THE COLOR OF GOLDEN EMBERS! HER LIPS WERE FULL WITH A SMILE, WHILE HER SPARKLING EYES WERE WILD AND HAUNTING! SHE WAS THE KIND OF WOMAN EVERY MAN DESIRES!

THE TOWN ITSELF WAS MUSKY...RANK WITH THE STENCH OF AGE! ON THE MANTLE WERE PERHAPS FIFTY BOTTLES...UNLABELLED AND CHOKED WITH DUST! INSIDE EACH WAS A STRANGE, MULTI-COLORED MIST!

ER...QUANT LITTLE PLACE YOU HAVE HERE! NOT SWARMING WITH CUSTOMERS, THOUGH!

WE CATER TO A RATHER SELECT CLIENTELE! PEOPLE WITH VERY SPECIFIC NEEDS!

WE ONLY SERVE ONE THING: A WINE! BOTTLE MYSELF. ANGEL HAVE WINE!



THE
FIRST GLASS
IS ON THE
HOUSE!

SHE
STARED, CAT-
EYED,
HER VOICE
HYPNOTICALLY
MELODIC.
I TOOK
A TENTATIVE
SIP!



THE WINE WAS SWEET AND
SUCULLENT, WITH THE RICH
TASTE OF LIQUID LOVE! THIS
WAS NO EARTHLY NECTAR, I
KNEW... BUT THE TASTE OF
MOONBEAMS, WISPERS AND
UNSHATTERED DREAMS!

AS I SAVORED IT, THE
WOMAN FLESHED AND
MOANED! IT LOOKED AS
THOUGH SHE WAS ENJOYING
MY PLEASURE AS MUCH AS I!

THEN... I HEARD IT! DULCET MELODIES
SPRINGING FROM THE JUKE BOX, WHICH,
A MOMENT BEFORE, HAD BEEN SILENT!

THE OLD MAN WALTZED ELOQUENTLY,
WRAPPED IN HIS OWN VIVID
DAYDREAMS! I COULD SEE TEARS OF
JOY TRICKLING DOWN HIS CHEEKS!

SLOWLY, THE WOMAN DRIFTED
TOWARD THE DANCE FLOOR,
SOMEHOW KNOWING THAT I WOULD
FOLLOW! IT WAS, THEN, I NOTICED
THE TIER OF HUMAN MANDS
HANGING ABOVE THE BAR!

I KNEW WITHOUT COUNTING THAT
THERE WERE TWELVE SEVEN OF
THEM! THEY WERE STAFF, WAXEN,
PAIRED CLEANLY AT THE WRIST, AND
NO DOUBT, ONCE ATTACHED TO
HUMAN LIMBS! I SHOULD HAVE BEEN
APPALLED! YET, SOMEHOW...
I WASN'T!

THE WOMAN PRESSED HER BODY TO
MINE! SHE FELT BRITTLE, LIKE
PARCHMENT, AND COLD AS GARROW!
WE DANCED, AS THE OLD MAN
ORBITED US IN GENTLE ORBITWORT!

CAUGHT IN THE MAGIC OF THE
MOMENT, I NEVER GUESSED WHERE
THE TERRIBLE WALTZ WOULD LEAD!



FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE NIGHT, I SWILLED WINE LIKE A SOD! SOON, I HAD A HEAD FULL OF PSYCHIC VISIONS, AND THE WOMAN MOTIONED ME TOWARD A RICKETY STAIRCASE!

THEN, IN A SUBTERRANEAN CELLAR, SHE TURNED TO ME.

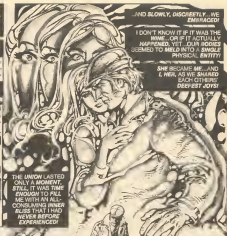


THE UNDO LASTED ONLY A MOMENT. STILL, IT WAS TIME ENOUGH TO FILL ME WITH AN ALL-CONSUMING INNER BLISS THAT I HAD NEVER BEFORE EXPERIENCED!

...AND SLOWLY, DISCREETLY... WE EMBRACED!

I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS THE WINE...OR IF IT ACTUALLY HAPPENED. YET...OUR BODIES SEEMED TO MELD INTO A SINGLE PHYSICAL ENTITY!

SHE BECAME ME...AND I HER, AS WE SHARED EACH OTHER'S DEEPEST JOYS!



WHEN, AT LAST, I CAME TO MY SENSES, I UNDERSTOOD THAT I HAD TASTED HEAVEN!

I HAVE ONLY ONE REGRET! NOW THAT I'VE TASTED PARADISE, REALITY SEEMS SO BLAND! CAN I BUY A CASE OF YOUR ANGEL HAIR WINE?

A LAUGH STUCK IN MY THROAT LIKE A PIECE OF BROKEN GLASS. AS I REALIZED THAT THE WOMAN WASN'T JOKING!

HOW COULD YOU EVEN ASK SUCH A THING?



SHE HESITATED A MOMENT...THEN SMILED THAT ENRAGING SMILE OF HERS! I KNEW THAT I WAS ABOUT TO HEAR A STORY THAT WOULD TAX MY VERY IMAGINATION!

THE STORM HAD BROKEN NOW! BEFORE! THE FIRST LIGHT OF MORNING WAS ALREADY PEERING THROUGH THE TAVERN WINDOWS! SNOW FLOWS WERE HARD AT WORK IN THE STREETS...AND I KNEW IT WAS TIME TO GO!

"WHEN THE EARTH WAS YOUNG, FIVE GOD-LIKE ALIEN NUMAHOIDS VOWED TO WATCH OVER THE BUDDING HUMAN SPECIES! THEY PLEDGED NEVER TO INTERFERE IN MAN'S AFFAIRS UNLESS THE SURVIVAL OF THE PLANET WAS IN JEOPARDY!"



IT'S YOURS, IF YOU WISH! ALL I ASK IN RETURN IS YOUR LEFT HAND!

"BUT IT CAME TO PASS THAT ONE OF THE
EXTRATERRESTRIAL DEITIES FELL IN LOVE WITH A
MORTAL WOMAN!"

"THE ALIEN'S LOVE WAS DEEP AND PURE, AND HIS
BROTHERS TURNED A BLIND EYE TO HIS PASSION,
FOR THE GIRL WAS A SIMPLE SOUL, NOT LIKELY TO
STEER HUMAN DESTINY!"

"BUT ONE NIGHT,
RETURNING FROM A
RENDZVOUS WITH HER
STAR-CROSSED GOD, THE
GIRL WAS SET UPON
VICIOUSLY... AND MURDERED
BY THIEVES!"

"HE SET FIRE TO THE
CITY, REDUCING CITIES
AND TOWNS TO
CINDERS! HE BLAMED
ALL MANKIND FOR THE
ACTIONS OF A FEW, AND
SWORE TO RID THE
EARTH OF HUMAN
VITAMIN!"

"SO UNCONTROLLABLE WAS
HIS RAGE, THAT THE OTHER
STAR GODS BOILED HIM
THROUGH THE GATEWAY TO
NOTHINGNESS... TO A PLACE
BEYOND HOPES AND TIME!"

"WHEN HER ALIEN LOVER
LEARNED WHAT HAD HAPPENED
...HE WENT STARK, RAVING
MAD!"

"MEN WERE AIDED BY THE
ANGRY ALIEN'S DISPLAY OF
POWER IN SOME BUILT
TEMPLES OFFERING
BLOODY SACRIFICES TO
PLACATE HIM! OTHERS,
WHO KNEW THE TRUTH OF
HIS UNBETRAYED DIGNITY,
COMBED RUMS AND
GRIMACES FOR A SPELL
TO RELEASE HIM FROM
CAPTIVITY!"

"FINALLY, AFTER UNTOLD
YEARS OF SEARCHING
...ONE SUCH SPELL WAS
INEVITABLY FOUND!"

"YET, BEFORE THE RITUAL
COULD BE INVOKED, THE
STAR-GODS LEARNED OF
THE HUMAN'S PLANS! THEY
CLEAVED THE EARTH
BENEATH THE IDOLATOR'S
TEMPLE... DESTROYING ALL
THE ZEALOTS WHO SOUGHT
TO CONTROL A BANISHED
GOD!"

"SO, THE LONE ALIEN
REMAINED IN EXILE...
WAITING FOR GODS TO
FULFILL HIS HOLY PURGE
...WHILE THE ONLY SPELL
THAT COULD FREE HIM WAS
BURNED BENEATH THE
TEMPLE... IN THE BOWELS
OF THE STILL-YOUNG
EARTH!"

"ONE DAY, HOWEVER, THE FOUR REMAINING GODS MOVED ON AS FOR THE NAMELESS GYL WHO HAD DARED LOVE A GOD BEFORE SHE WAS SLAIN... HER SOUL LIVED AND DIED IN A DOZEN DIFFERENT BODIES, REINCARNATED REPEATEDLY THROUGHOUT THE AGES!"



"YET, ALWAYS, SHE REMEMBERED THE ALIEN WHOM SHE'D LOVED! AND ALWAYS, SHE WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN HER ATTEMPTS TO FREE HIM FROM HIS OTHERWORLDLY PRISON!"

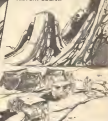
"AND THEN, SHE WAS BORN INTO THIS CENTURY... THE DAUGHTER OF A NOTED ARCHAEOLOGIST!"

"EVEN AS A CHILD, ANGELA DREAMWEAVER HAD TERRIBLE VIVID DREAMS... OF NAMELESS VOIDS AND MAD BUT LOVING GODS!"



"I KNOW... FOR I AM ANGELA DREAMWEAVER!"

"THOUGH MY PARENTS WERE WELL-VERSED IN THE LORE OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS, THEY HAD NEVER BEFORE HEARD THE LEGEND OF THE MAD GOD WHO LOVED A MORTAL! AND HOW COULD THEY...? THE INCIDENT HAD TAKEN PLACE LONG BEFORE WRITTEN HISTORY BEGAN!"



"THEY DOUBTED MY CLAIM THAT I COULD LEAD THEM TO THE RUINS OF A TEMPLE DESTROYED BY ALIEN GODS... NEVERTHELESS, FOR THE SAKE OF MY SAFETY... THE J. EDGAR HOOVER ADMINISTRATION TOOK SEE IF THERE WAS ANY VALIDITY TO MY DREAMS!"

"FOR MONTHS, WE DUG WITHOUT SUCCESS... UNTIL A BREAK AVALANCHE KILLED MY MOTHER!"

"BROKEN-HEARTED, BITTER, MY FATHER WAS READY TO TURN BACK! YET I BEGGED, PLEADED AND CRIED... AND FINALLY PERSUADED HIM TO CONTINUE THE EXCAVATION!"

"THE VERY NEXT DAY... WE FOUND THE TEMPLE!"



"AMONG THE ARTIFACTS WE UNearthED WERE TWO SCROLLS OF Papyrus! ONE WAS THE RECIPE FOR ANGEL MAN WINE! THE OTHER... THE SPELL TO FREE MY STAR-GOD FROM HIS OTHERWORLDLY PRISON!"



"IT TOOK YEARS TO TRANSLATE THE PALAEOGRAPHY! I DECIPHERED THE RECIPE FIRST, SIMPLY BECAUSE IT WAS THE SHORTEST AND SIMPLEST OF THE TWO! WHEN I PRODUCED THE BREW, IT WAS EASY TO SEE WHY IT HAD BEEN A FAVORITE OF THE ANCIENTS!"

"MY FATHER, WHO WAS NEVER THE SAME AFTER MOTHER DIED, BECAME ADDICTED TO THE LIQUOR AT LEAST IN HIS MIND. THE WINE BROUGHT HER BACK TO LIFE!"



"IT WAS THEN I CONCENTRATED ON DECIPHERING THE SPELL! BUT TO JUMP MY UNSTAINABLE LOWER BACK REQUIRED FIFTY HUMAN HANDS... TO BE BURNED LIKE HELL-SPAWNED CANDLES!"

"AT FIRST, I HAUNTED HOSPITALS, MORGUES AND GRAVEYARDS, TAKING THE HANDS FROM THOSE WHO NO LONGER NEEDED THEM. BUT A FEW CLOSE CALLS CONVINCED ME THAT THERE HAD TO BE A BETTER WAY."

"FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, I'VE SERVED THE WINE TO THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE MEANINGLESS. I'VE GIVEN THEM A BRIEF GLASS OF HAPPINESS, FREE, TO WHET THEIR APPETITES. ..."

"ANGEL HAIR WINE IS WHATEVER YOU WANT IT TO BE! TO MY FATHER, IT WAS HIS LOST WIFE! TO YOU, IT'S HEAVENLY RUSS! IS IT ANY WONDER THAT WITH ONE TASTE, MEN BECOME ANGEL HAIR WINE?"

"ONLY THEN DID IT OCCUR TO ME THAT THE ANCIENTS HAD TRIED TO SHOW ME THE WAY WHEN THEY LEFT ME THE RECIPE FOR ANGEL HAIR WINE!"

"AND THEN THEY WERE MORE THAN WILLING TO LEND ME A HAND, SO TO SPEAK, IN EXCHANGE FOR A LIFETIME SUPPLY!"

NOT ME, SISTER. I LIKE MY HANDS RIGHT WHERE THEY ARE!



BESIDES, IF YOUR STORY'S TRUE, AND THIS GOD OF YOURS COMES BACK, THE WORLD IS DOOMED... AND WITH ME ALONG WITH IT!

I STORMED FROM THE BAR, ANGRY, CONFUSED AND WONDERING IF THE WOMAN SHOULDN'T BE COMMITTED FOR AWHILE! I CONSIDERED CALLING THE POLICE... BUT FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON, I COULDN'T!

BY LATE AFTERNOON, THE ONLY THING MOVING ON THE STREETS WERE SNOW FLOWS, MOVING THEIR WAY THROUGH ANOTHER BLIZZARD! IT WAS CRAZY... THE BAR WOULD SURELY BE CLOSED BUT I HAD TO GO BACK! I HAD TO TASTE THE WINE AGAIN... TO ASSURE MYSELF THAT I WASN'T GOING AS INSANE AS THE GUY!

I FOUND THE PLACE EASILY ENOUGH! BUT EVERYTHING WAS GONE... ALL GONE! THE BAR, THE TABLES, THE CHAIRS, THE GUY AND HIS WINE! THE PLACE WAS AS EMPTY AS MY SOUL... AND I KNEW THEN THAT I'D NEVER FIND HEAVEN AGAIN!



INSTEAD, I STAYED IN MY HOTEL ROOM FOR THE BETTER PART OF A DAY... WONDERING HOW I COULD HAVE PASSED UP MY ONLY CHANCE AT UTTER, LIFELONG HAPPINESS!



IT'S BEEN SIX MONTHS SINCE I MET ANGELA DISEMPOWERED AND TASTED HER WINE. I'VE QUIT TRAVELLING, AND GONE INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH MY FATHER-IN-LAW, IN REAL ESTATE.

MY WIFE THINKS I HATE MY JOB! MY FATHER-IN-LAW THINKS I HATE MY WIFE! MAYBE THEY'RE BOTH MORE RIGHT THAN I GUESS TO ADMIT!



IT IS NOT THAT LIFE WITH JUDY IS BAD! IT'S JUST THAT WELL I'VE TASTED HEAVEN AND IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MARIJUANA! PUNNY... HOW A SINGLE MOMENT OF BLISS CAN TURN AN ENTIRE LIFETIME INTO UTTER CREDULITY!



MY UNHAPPINESS IS A CONSTANT SOURCE OF FRICTION BETWEEN US! AFTER A PARTICULARLY NASTY ARGUMENT, I FIND MYSELF WALKING AIMLESSLY, NOT PAYING MUCH ATTENTION TO WHERE I'M GOING, AS I CONTEMPLATE DRASTIC CHANGES IN MY MARITAL STATUS!

THEN... I SEE IT! MY SECOND CHANCE AT A LIFETIME OF BLISS!



THE GIRL... THE BAR... THE WIFE AND EVEN THE SEVERED HANDS ARE ALL THERE!

I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU! SOONER OR LATER, THEY ALWAYS COME BACK!

I WALK RIGHT PAST HER, PAST THE OLD MAN AT THE WHIRLPOOL, AND LOOK ANXIOUSLY AT THE HANDS! THERE ARE FORTY-EIGHT!

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW YOU MUST BE EAGER TO SEE YOUR STAR-GOD AFTER ALL THIS TIME!



IT ISN'T EASY CARRYING THE CASE OF WINE WITH ONE HAND! BUT, SOMEHOW, I MANAGE!

FOR ALL OUR SAKES, I HOPE THE GIRL'S POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS HAVE MORE WILL POWER THAN I YET. I DOUBT IT! AND YOU KNOW SOMEHOW, I JUST DON'T GIVE A DAMN!

end











O-GOOD LORD
SAMP! IT'S MOVING!
SOMETHING'S COMING OUT
OF THAT BIG FLYING
SHIP! SOMETHING
... HUGE!

LET'S
LET'S GET
THE HELL
OUT OF
HERE
FAST!

A CLAW-LIKE FINGER SLOWLY
EMERGES FROM THE GAPING
HATCH OF THE SHIP! IT IS
SWIFTLY FOLLOWED BY THE
TANK TO WHICH IT IS AFFIXED!



IT RISES TO ITS FULL
HEIGHT! GIGANTIC... A
MONOLITH OF GLEISTING
METAL, UNDISPUTED
MASTER OF ALL IT
SURVEYS...



AND WHAT IT SURVEYS IS A FRAIL, NEW ENGLAND
FISHING VESSEL BEING VIOLENTLY BATTERED BY
LUNCHING WAVES!



SAMP!
IT'S
PICKING US UP,
LIKE... LIKE
WE'RE SOME
KIND OF
TOY!

THE METAL
MONSTER'S
FACE-PLATE
EXAMINES THE
CRAFT WITH
SEARCHLIGHT
BRIGHTNESS... ITS BEAM
PLUCKS THROUGH
MYRIAD LEVELS
OF THE KNOWN
SPECTRUM, AND
BEYOND!

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!



ITS BELLERING
RAVE SCREEZES THE
MEN'S EYES,
BLINDING
THEM AS THE
TORRID HEAT
CHARS THE
FLESH ON THEIR
BONES! WITHIN
MOMENTS, THE
HATCH
RADIATION HAS
KILLED THEM
BOTH!

ITS ANALYSIS COMPLETE, THE TOWERING MONSTROSITY CALLOUSLY HURLS THE BOAT ASIDE IN SEEDING DISGUST!



PERHAPS IT FAILS TO RECOGNIZE ORGANIC LIFE... HUMAN LIFE. OR THAT THESE MEN ARE INTELLIGENT, SAPIENT BEINGS...!



OR MAYBE IT DOES AND SIMPLY DOESN'T CARE!

WITH BUT THREE STRIDES OF ITS NIGHTMARISH METAL LIMBS, IT IS UPON THE TINY FISHING VILLAGE... AN ALIEN APPARITION OF STAR-FORGED METAL!



MANY SCREAM AND MINDLESSLY FLEE! OTHERS CAN ONLY STARE, ROOTED IN FEAR WHERE THEY STAND!



ALL ARE STARKLY ILLUMINATED BY THE TWIN GLARES OF SWEEPING, DEADLY SEARCH-BEAMS!





LIKE A SPOILED, FRUSTRATED CHILD UNABLE TO ACHIEVE SOME UNOBTAINABLE GOAL, THE ROBOT-THING LASHES OUT AT THE TERROR-STRIKEN TOWN, WREAKING UTER WAMOC AND LEAVING ONLY CARMADE IN ITS WAKE!



AS THE TERRIFIED WOMAN PLUNGES TO HER DEATH, THE SMALL BOY AND HIS SPANIEL ARE GENTLY CAUGHT AND CRADLED IN AND-FALL!



NOOOO! IT COULD'VE GRABBED HER TOO...BUT IT DIDN'T! IT DIDN'T! IT LET HER FALL AND AND-OH MOTHER... "SOB!" MOTHERAAA!



CLUTCHING THE EDGE OF THE CREATURE'S COLD METAL GLAW, THE QUIVERING YOUTH GOES INTO SHOCK, AS HE PEERS DOWN INTO THE GLOOM...

AND BEES HIS MOTHER WMALED ON THE SKELETAL RUINS OF THEIR HOUSE!



CHOKED WITH RAW EMOTION, TEARS WELL FROM THE BOY'S SWOLLEN EYES, MIXING WITH THE FREEZING RAIN THAT SPATTERS WETLY AGAINST HIS FACE!

A PITIFUL HEAP, JAMES WEE IS WHILE THE WHIMPERING DOG SNUGGLES AGAINST HIM!



THE GARGANTUAN ALIEN, ITS STRANGE QUEST SUDDENLY OVER, TURNS AND MARCHES AWAY. THE GROUND TREMBLING AND SHAKING WITH EACH PONDEROUS STEP!





AGAIN, IT WADES THE DEEP, RETURNING TO ITS DAMAGED SWIM, AND THE SHATTERED REMNANTS OF ANOTHER LITTERING THE ACROSS NOT FAR FROM IT!



D-DAD!
OH, GOD
NO! NOT HIM,
TOO!



MOM, DAD
BOTH DEAD!
N-NO... PLEASE
GOD, WOOD!
I WANT TO
DIE, TOO!



BUT THE BOY'S GRIEF, FILLED P-PLAYERS DO UNANSWERED AS A HUGE WATCH SUDDENLY HUMS OPEN AT THE METAL MONSTER'S THUNDEROUS APPROACH!



THEY ENTER A VESSEL OF AMAZING COMPLEXITY... ONE THAT RELEGATES EARTH'S HIGH TECHNOLOGY TO A LEVEL OF PRIMITIVE BARRAKISM!



IT'S PUTTING US DOWN, LIKE, LIKE IT EXPECTS ME TO DO SOMETHING BUT WHAT?



DO NOT JUDGE MY COMPANION TOO HARSHLY, YOUTHING! HE IS NOT QUITE AN EQUAL... YET MORE TO ME THAN A PET!

WHILE OBSERVING AND MAPPING YOUR PLANET, A THRUST-DRIVE UNIT MALFUNCTIONED!



I WAS GREVIOUSLY INJURED IN THE RESULTING CRASH! X'LOU'S INTELLIGENCE IS EXTREMELY LIMITED. IN CONTRAST TO HIS AWESOME PRODIGIOUS STRENGTH!

HE KNEW THAT I WAS TERMINATING! IN A DAZED, CONFUSED STATE HE SOUGHT HELP FROM YOUR WORLD'S DOMINANT SPECIES!



BUT YOUR TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL IS TOO CRUDE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE TO MY INTERNAL MECHANISMS!

THUS... I AM DOOMED, IN A MATTER OF CHRONONS, TO PERISH!



BUT WHY? WHY DID IT BRING ME HERE? I'M ONLY A KID! WHAT DID IT WANT FROM ME?

NOTHING FROM YOU, STRIPLING! HE DESIRED AID FROM THE BEFURMED MAMMAL THAT ACCOMPANIES YOU!



SINCE I AM QUADRUPEDAL, X'LOU ASSUMED THE MASTER LIFE-FORM ON YOUR SPHERE WOULD LIKEWISE BE FOUR-FOOTED!



HE DIDN'T BRING YOU TO SAVE ME! RATHER, IN HIS MONUMENTAL IGNORANCE, HE BROUGHT WHAT YOU CALL... YOUR DOG!



FORGIVE X'LOU, HUMAN! AS I EXPIRE, I BEG YOU... FORGIVE HIM!



MY NAME IS STEPHEN ABRAHAM I'M A MAGAZINE WRITER!

OH, I'M NOT FAMOUS OR ANYTHING BUT IF YOU LIVE IN NEW YORK AND READ MAGAZINES, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER YOU'VE PROBABLY READ ONE OF MY ARTICLES!

THAT'S ME IN THE PICTURE... THE MAN HOLDING THE GUN! AND NO, I'M NOT A BLACK MAN... THAT'S JUST A DISGUISE I WAS WEARING! YOU SEE, THAT GUN, AND THAT DISGUISE ARE ALL A PART OF MY



YOU WERE A BIT VAGUE ON THE PHONE, MRS. WOODSON! EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF ARTICLE DO YOU-!

MORBID LOVE STORY

IT ALL BEGAN INNOCENTLY ENOUGH! JANICE WOODSON WAS THE EDITOR OF METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE! TO MET HER A FEW TIMES AT PROFESSIONAL COCKTAIL PARTIES! WHEN SHE CALLED TO INVITE ME TO LUNCH, I ASSUMED SHE WANTED TO TALK BUSINESS. I



Author MICHAEL FLISBERG Illustration: AURALEON





DON'T ASK ME WHY I DECIDED TO DO IT!
I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW! MAYBE IT WAS
BECAUSE OF HER OPENNESS, HER
WARMTH, HER SEXUALITY...
OR THE FACT THAT SHE WAS
HONEST AND UNAIDED



WE MET OFTEN, THREE TIMES A WEEK,
SOMETIMES FOUR, SOMETIMES JUST FOR A
WALK IN THE PARK, OR LUNCH AT A SIDEWALK
CAFE

SOMETIMES FOR LEISURELY ROMANTIC
DINNERS BY CANDLELIGHT AND LONG NIGHTS
OF MAKING LOVE



I LOVE
YOU JANICE

I LOVE
YOU TOO, STEPHEN
YOU CAN T IMAGINE
HOW MUCH I LOVE
YOU!

BEFORE LONG, I HAD FALLEN HOPELESSLY IN LOVE WITH HER. I WANTED DESPERATELY TO MAKE JANICE MINE...
FOREVER!

LEAVE YOUR
HUSBAND! LEAVE HIM AND
STAY WITH ME!

NO!
I WON'T DO
THAT! I TOLD
YOU FROM THE
BEGINNING I'D
NEVER DO
THAT!

WHEN
WE'RE TOGETHER,
I'M YOURS, MY
DEAREST! BUT
THE REST OF THE
TIME...



TO HELL
WITH THAT! IF
YOU REALLY LOVED
ME...

SWINE! I DO
LOVE YOU! YOU KNOW
I LOVE YOU! BUT MY LIFE
WITH ANN AND THE CHILDREN
IS AN IMPORTANT PART
OF ME! I COULD
NEVER GIVE
IT UP!





WRITERS ARE SELDOM VIOLENT PEOPLE! WHEN THEY HAVE VIOLENT FANTASIES, THEY WRITE ABOUT THOSE FANTASIES! THEY DON'T USUALLY ACT THEM OUT! USUALLY!

BUT I WAS INSANELY IN LOVE WITH THAT WOMAN, AND THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERED WAS THAT IF IT WEREN'T FOR HER HUSBAND, I COULD HAVE HAD JANICE ALL FOR MY OWN!



THAT'S WHEN I GOT MY INSPIRATION! IT WAS A SIMPLE IDEA REALLY! BUT, THEN, MOST INSPIRATIONS ARE SIMPLE!

IN COLLEGE I HAD THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING AN ACTRESS! I LUGGAGED THROUGH MY TRUNK UNTIL I FOUND AN OLD MAKEUP KIT!



AND THEN I WENT UP TO HARLEM AND BOUGHT AN AFRO MFG. A FAKE MOUSTACHE AND SOME BRIGHTLY COLORED GLOVES...





THE IDEA, AS I SAID, WAS SIMPLE!



BUT THE END RESULT WAS
EXTREMELY DRAMATIC!



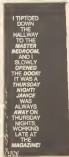
LATER THAT NIGHT, I TOOK A BUS TO THE APARTMENT
JAWICE SHARED WITH HER HUSBAND (AND HER TWO SMALL
CHILDREN) I CLIMBED THE FIRE ESCAPE...



THEN,
STEALTHILY,
SILENTLY,
OPENED A
WINDOW AND
SLIPPED
INSIDE!



I WAS IN THE CHILDREN'S ROOM,
AND THEY WERE FAST ASLEEP! I
HAVE NEVER HAD CHILDREN OF MY
OWN, BUT I'VE ALWAYS LOVED
THEM!



I TIPPED
DOWN
THE
HALLWAY
TO THE
MASTER
BEDROOM,
AND I
SLOWLY
OPENED
THE DOOR!
IT WAS A
THURSDAY
NIGHT! JAWICE
WAS
ALWAYS
AWAY ON
THURSDAY
NIGHTS,
WORKING
LATE AT
THE
MAGAZINE!



HER HUSBAND HAD
FALLEN ASLEEP
READING! FOR A
MOMENT, I STOOD
IN THE DARKNESS
AND STARED AT
HIM!

I HAD NOTHING
AGAINST THE
MAN! NOTHING AT
ALL! UNDER
DIFFERENT
CIRCUMSTANCES,
WE MIGHT EVEN
HAVE BECOME
FRIENDS!

I SHOULDN'T MEANT FOR HIM TO WAKE UP, BUT
SUDDENLY, HE DID!



I HAD PROMISED MYSELF
THAT I WOULDN'T TORTURE
HIM OR MAKE HIM SUFFER!

AS QUICKLY AS I COULD, I
EMPTIED MY CLIP INTO HIS
JERKING BODY!



THEN I
HURRIEDLY
RANSACKED THE
ROOM TO
MAKE IT LOOK
LIKE A
COMMON
BURGLARY!



I THEN
CLIMBED
THROUGH
THE
BEDROOM
WINDOW
...AND
ESCAPED
INTO THE
SAFETY OF
THE NIGHT!







FEELING ANGRY AS HELL... BETRAYED AND HURT, I STALKED OUT OF JANICE'S APARTMENT, AND WALKED AIMLESSLY FOR HOURS!



I WALKED DOWN TO THE RIVER, AND STARED BLANKLY OUT OVER THE WATER. I COULD SEE THE LIGHTS ON THE JERSEY SHORE BLINKING... BLINKING... HYPNOTICALLY AND I WONDERED HOW THE WOMAN I LOVED SO MUCH... COULD THINK SO LITTLE... OF ME!



I KNOW IT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS... BUT THE COAT AND SHOES WERE EXPENSIVE, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO GET THEM WET!



I REMEMBER, I HAD MY NEW HEAVY WINTER COAT ON, AND SHOES THAT I'D BOUGHT EARLIER IN THE WEEK. I TOOK THEM OFF, AND I PUT THEM ON THE SEAWALL BESIDE ME!



GOD HELP ME! DID I DO THE RIGHT THING?

WAS I RIGHT TO SEND STEPHEN AWAY?





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YONDER STAR

THOUGH THE NAVY JET'S PASSAGE OVER THE ROLLING OCEAN WAS SMOOTH AND STRAIGHT INSIDE THE COCKPIT THE MIND OF PILOT GUS TRASK WAS IN TURMOIL A FEW MINUTES BEFORE, HIS INSTRUMENTATION SUDDENLY WINKED AND DIED! EVEN HIS FUEL GAUGE WAS GONE! HIS EMERGENCY SYSTEM HAD NOT KICKED TO LIFE AS THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO! IT WAS ALMOST AS IF GOD IN HIS HEAVEN HAD SCoured THE EARTH AT RANDOM, SPOTTED GUS TRASK AND SAID, "YOU!"

GUS DIDN'T KNOW IF HE HAD ENOUGH FUEL TO LAST HIM EVEN ONE HOUR! HE ONLY KNEW THAT IF HE DIDN'T FIND LAND SOON, HIS NAME AND NUMBER WOULD BECOME JUST ANOTHER STATISTIC CHALKED UP IN FAVOR OF THE FOREBODING SEAS! IT WAS DECEMBER 24TH... A LOUSY DAY TO DIE!



WE CANNOT LOSE HEART NOW MY BROTHERS! PLEASE, WE MUST CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY AS PLANNED!

THIS THIRDE-CURSED DESERT! WE BURN IN THE DAYS AND FREEZE IN THE NIGHTS! AND NOW WE ARE LOST! LOST! DOOM SURELY AWAITS US!

THE WEATHER HAD BEEN CLEAR AND THE STARS HAD GLITTERED LIKE DIAMONDS IN THE SKY. GUS HAD BEEN TRACKING OUTBOUND ON THE NASSAU V.O.R. - VISUAL OMNI RANGE, - TO INTERCEPT THE BWWV V.O.R. EN ROUTE!



AT ABOUT 9:30 HE PASSED THE NORTHERN TIP OF ANDROS ISLAND. HE COULD SEE THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS BLINKING IN THE SETTLEMENTS!

HE HAD LEVELLED OFF AT EIGHT THOUSAND FEET AND WAS SETTling BACK FOR A ROUTINE FLIGHT!



THEN, THIRTY TO FIFTY MILES PAST ANDROS, ON A DIRECT HEADING FOR BIVINI, HE NOTICED A FAINT GLOWING EFFECT ON HIS WINGS!

IN THE COURSE OF FIVE MINUTES, THE GLOW HAD BECOME BLINDING. THE MAGNETIC COMPASS BEGAN SPINNING DRUNKENLY AND ALL HIS INSTRUMENTS DIED!



HIS AUTO PILOT HAD BEGUN FIGHTING GUS, SO HE SWITCHED IT OFF AND FLEW MANUALLY...DIRECTLY INTO A COLORLESS, WHIRLING HOLE IN THE SKY!



GUS TRASK COULD NO LONGER RELY ON HIS GYRO, HORIZON, OR ALTITUDE INDICATORS! THEY PROVIDED HIS ARTIFICIAL HORIZON, BUT NOW THEY WERE GONE! HE WOULD HAVE TO RELY ON HIMSELF! BUT... CONFIDENT AS HE WAS... HE FOUND HIMSELF PRAYING!



BUT NOW, AS IF FOLLOWING THE LEAD OF HIS TREACHEROUS INSTRUMENTS, THE VERY UNIVERSE BLINKED OUT ON HIM! THE STARS, THE MOON, EVEN THE OCEAN... HE'D LOST THEM ALL! FOR A MOMENT HIS HEAD SPUN IN NEAR-PANIC!

BUT THEN... OUT OF THE MOMENTARY SHADOWS OF NOTWINGNESS THAT HAD BLANKETED HIM... A BEACH! HE'D FOUND LAND! GUS TRASK SHOUTED WITH RELIEF AND DELIGHT! ALL HE HAD TO DO NOW WAS DROP LOWER, CHECK OUT LANDMARKS BY VISUAL IDENTIFICATION AND HOME IN ON THE AIRFIELD. ANY AIRFIELD HE WAS SAFE AGAIN... AND THE MOMENTARY PANIC HE'D FELT... THE MURMURED PRAYERS... DREAMERSS BEFORE... HE'D NEVER BELIEVED IN A GOD! HE'D GOTTEN OUT OF THIS PICKLE HIMSELF!



ONE THING BOTHERED HIM, THOUGH... UNLESS HIS NEAR PANIC HAD OBSCURED HIS SENSE OF TIME, IT WAS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE THAT HE HAD REACHED FLORIDA IN SO SHORT A TIME!



BUT HE COULD NOT ARGUE WITH THE FACTS! HE DROPPED LOW ENOUGH UNTIL HE COULD MAKE OUT THE SAND DUNES AND THE PALM TREES! YEP... FLORIDA! HE COULDN'T WAIT TO WRAP HIMSELF AROUND A BEER AND TELL HIS TALE OF BLIND FLYING AT NIGHT!

MY GRIEF IS TERRIBLE... MY SERVANT HAS DIED, FOLLOWING MY LEAD! AND YET, I WAS ONLY HEARKENING TO THE CALL OF MY GOD!

AND WHO WILL DIE NEXT? WHO CAN YOU PREDICT THAT, WISE ONE?



IT WILL NOT BE ME! I WILL ESCAPE THIS TORMENTING DESERT! I WILL FLEE... THIS WAY, YES, THAT! ANYWAY!

COME BACK, FOOL! WE MUST STAY TOGETHER! YOU WILL DIE OUT THERE ALONE! COME BACK!

LET HIM GO! HE HAS MET MAGNESS! SOON HE WILL MEET DEATH!



GUS TRASK BEGAN HIS SEARCH FOR HIS #BARGE...JUST ONE LANDMARK WOULD DO! BUT THERE WAS NOTHING!



THE BEACH STRETCHED ON AND ON...ENDLESS REACHES OF ROLLING SAND DUNES AND PALM TREES AND NOTHING MORE! THIS SURE WASN'T THE FLORIDA HE'D KNOWN IN HIS COLLEGE DAYS!

JUST WHEN HE'D THOUGHT HE WAS SAFE...MORE FUEL, MORE UNKNOWNNS!



GUS TRASK FOUGHT THE URGE TO PRAY! HE'D GOTTEN ALONG ALL HIS LIFE WITHOUT GOD...HE COULD DAMN WELL FIND A BEARING IN FLORIDA WITHOUT HIM TOO!

AS THE DESPERATE SEARCH GREW INTO LONG MINUTES...AN HOUR...NEVER KNOWING WHEN HE MIGHT RUN OUT OF FUEL...GUS TRASK'S STOMACH BEGAN TO KNOW! SOMETHING WAS WRONG! THERE WAS NOT SO MUCH AS A MATCHSTICK OUT THERE!



GUS INCREASED HIS AIRSPEED TO NEARLY FOUR HUNDRED KNOTS! ALL RIGHT, DAMNIT, HE PUMPED. I MAY RUN OUT OF FUEL...BUT I'LL BUILD UP ENOUGH SPEED TO FLY FOREVER, DEFYING GOD'S OWN LAWS OF PHYSICS AND LOGIC!

LOOK YOU THERE! SAND-SMUGGED TRACKS! I FEAR THAT WE HAVE BEEN WALKING IN CIRCLES! ONLY A MIRACLE CAN SAVE US NOW...!

BUT MIRACLES HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE OUR FOREFATHERS RULED THE DESERT!



BY THE PROPHET! LOOK UP IN THE SKY!

WE ARE BLESSED AS WERE OUR FOREFATHERS! A SIGN! A SHINING OMEN! BEHOLD!

PRaise BE TO GOD!



SUDDENLY, THROUGH THE SPECTRAL GLOW OF HIS OWN AIRCRAFT, GUS TRASK SAW A FAINT LIGHT ON THE NIGHT-SHROUDED HORIZON! HE EXULTED...A CITY! HE INCREASED HIS AIRSPEED TO THE MAX! THEN, HIS HEART SAWK...THE LIGHTS OF THE TOWN SHOULD BE GETTING CLOSER... BUT THEY WEREN'T!



AT THIS POINT HIS JET SHOULD HAVE BROKEN THROUGH THE SOUND BARRIER...IT DIDN'T!



IN FACT, AS HE LOOKED OUT HIS PLEXIGLASS WINDOWS, HE SAW THAT THE GROUND WAS ONLY CHAMBLING BY AT THIS SPEED AND LOW ALTITUDE. THE GROUND SHOULD HAVE BEEN A BLUR! IT WASN'T!

AN ICY COLD FEAR CREEPT OVER GUS TRASK'S SOUL! SOMETHING MORE THAN MECHANICAL ERROR WAS AT PLAY HERE...TIME AND NATURE HAD TURNED IN UNWILLING AGAINST MAN'S REALITY!



GUS TRASK BEGAN TO PRAY! WITHOUT APOLOGY OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, GUS BESEECHEH GOD TO AID HIM, TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT AGAIN, TO SEND HIM HOME UNHARMED!

HURRY FRIENDS! HURRY! THE SHINING STAR WAITS FOR US! WE MUST HURRY AND FOLLOW IT!

YES, HURRY! FOLLOW YONDER STAR!



HOW MAGNIFICENT IT IS! WITH ALL OUR MIGHT AND ALL OUR FAITH WE SHALL FOLLOW WHERE IT LEADS!

SURELY WE ARE IN BEHOLD OF A MIRACLE OF GOD!





GUS TRASK FORGOT HIS PRAYING AS THE TOWN AT LAST LOOMED BELOW HIM! BUT IT WAS LIKE NO TOWN HE'D SEEN IN HIS LIFE! EVEN AS HE GAZED UPON THE TINY ANCIENT BUILDINGS, A FEELING OF AWE AND FEAR OVERCAME HIM!



TIME HAD SLOWED TO A STANDSTILL... HE FELT AS IF HE WERE FATHOMS DEEP UNDERWATER! ALL WAS SILENCE! ALL WAS SLOW, AND THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS SOMETHING IN HIS SKULL! HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS SEEING! HE ONLY KNEW THAT HE DID NOT BELONG HERE, THAT THIS WAS THE WRONG PLACE AND TIME FOR HIS CRAFT! HE ONLY KNEW THAT HE HAD TO TEAR FREE OF THE GIANT HAND WHICH SEEMED TO HOLD HIS PLANE! TEAR FREE AND FIND HOME!

GUS TRASK AIMED THE NOSE OF HIS PLANE AT THE SKIES AND ACCELERATED!

HIS ENGINES SCREAMED IN TORTURE AS HE FOUGHT THE STICK WHICH TRIED TO MANGLE HIM TOWARD THE NIGHTMARE BELOW! THE JET STRUGGLED LIKE A CROPPLED MAN TOWARD THE CLOUDS!



THE PLANE SHUDDERED AND TWISTED! ITS SEAMS STRAINED, WHILE THE PRESSURE RIVETED HIM AGAINST THE CHAIR! IT WAS WORKING! HE COULD FEEL IT! HE WAS GAINING ALTITUDE AND SPEED! HE KNEW! AT LAST, HE WAS BREAKING FREE!



PRaise Our Lord and Master! JO! HE HAS SET HIS WONDERous STAR ABOVE THE CITY! HE HAS BROUGHT US TO OUR GOAL! PRAISE HIS NAME FOREVER!



AYE! AND LET US PRAISE HIS WONDERous LIGHT! BEHOLD HOW IT RISES INTO THE SKY ABOVE THE CITY! LIKE A BEACON OF FAITH, LOVE, AND HOLY SPLENDOR!

TRULY THIS IS WHERE WE SHALL FIND THE ONE WE SEEK!

THE PLANE SHOOK AND POUNDED LIKE A SPARROW IN A GALE AS THE ENGINES ROARED LIKE THUNDER



THE ENGINES WERE OVERHEATING... THEY WERE BEING PUSHED TOO FAR! STILL, GUS TRASK DREW BACK ON THE STICK! HE WOULD PUSH HIS PLANE UP INTO THE DECEMBER NIGHT SKY. HE WOULD BREAK THE INVISIBLE TITAN'S GRIP ON HIS PLANE... OR DIE TRYING!

IF IT WAS A GOD THAT HAD SMATTERED NATURE'S LAWS TO PUT HIM HERE... GUS TRASK WOULD DEFTY THAT GOD'S PLAN HE PASSED HIS ENGINES TO THE LAST!



JEJEJESSSSSS!

HOT TEARS OF RAIN EMOTION STEAMED DOWN HIS TENSE FACE! HE FELT THE CRAFT SUCK AND LEAP... HE'D BROKEN FREE OF THE ENIGMATIC GRIP... FREE OF THE FEAR THAT HAD MADE HIM PRAY LIKE A BABBLING SCHOOLBOY! THE PLANE SHOT SKYWARD LIKE A CATAPULTED STONE!

KA-FLOOM!



GUS TRASK PROBABLY NEVER KNEW THAT HIS PLANE'S FINAL RADIANT-ENERGY GASP BECAME A LIGHT OF SUCH BRILLIANCE THAT IT STARTLED THE EARTH... AND WAS NEVER FORGOTTEN...

THE SHINING STAR OF BETHLEHEM

GOD HAS SURELY LED US INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLIEST OF US ALL! TRULY FRIENDS, THIS IS THE CHRIST CHILD!



THE NAVY'S EXPLANATION FOR THE LOSS OF PILOT GUS TRASK AND HIS FIGHTER JET WAS DRY AND PREDICTABLE: EQUIPMENT OR PILOT ERROR... LOST AT SEA!

ONLY FANATICS AND DREAMERS, THOSE WHO HAVE FELT THE BLUDGEONOUS HAND OF GOD, SPECULATED OTHERWISE... THAT EVEN AN ALMIGHTY DEITY MIGHT NEED HELP IN HIS GREATEST WORKS... AND THAT PILOT GUS TRASK WAS AN UNWILLING ASSOCIATE IN A MIRACLE!

et al

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